CONCEPT NOTE

2023
Psychosocial Support Forum
Mental health in context

7th Regional Psychosocial Support (PSS) Forum
4 – 5 OCTOBER 2023
The theme for the 7th Regional PSS Forum is "Mental Health in Context". The forum will explore the social, cultural, geographical, economic determinants of mental health. Taking into consideration the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, the forum will interrogate the correlation between mental health outcomes, mental health interventions and services, and other priority wellbeing outcomes for all African children and youth in a world that is recovering from the impact of COVID, impacted by war and climate change. Key thematic issues for discussion will include Child Rights and Protection, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Prevention and Management, Education, Early Childhood Development (ECD), Disability Inclusion, Pandemics and Technology.

REPSSI convenes the Regional Psychosocial Support forum to emphasize the need for locally designed solutions that will enable sustainable access to essential Mental Health and Psychosocial Support services while considering the socio-cultural context and existing barriers that children and youth in the region face in accessing mental healthcare.

The 7th PSS forum provides an opportunity to bring together stakeholders working on mental health related issues and share innovations in MHPSS, collaborate, influence the formulation and review of relevant policies, enhance programming and network. The forum will be blended, with a main physical forum in South Africa, and virtual streaming for partners around the globe.

**Forum Objectives:**

- To share experiences and practices in MHPSS across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus across the region
- To provide a platform and ensure meaningful participation by stakeholders who are usually marginalised or excluded from MHPSS discussions, such as children, youth and persons with disabilities.
- To influence formulation, review and implementation of policies that promote mental health and psychosocial wellbeing.
How will children and youth be involved?
REPSSI recognizes that it is critical to continue learning from and with children and youth to develop effective MHPSS programmes. To that end, the main forum will be preceded by a "Pre-forum" that will bring together children and youth from different countries in the region. Participants will share knowledge, information, skills and experiences on issues which enhance or hinder their mental health and psychosocial wellbeing and come up with possible solutions to improve their resilience.

The objectives of the children and youth Pre-forum are:
- To empower children and youth with critical MHPSS skills that will see them impacting their peers positively.
- To provide a platform for learning and sharing for children and youth from different backgrounds and contexts.
- To package key issues affecting children and youth in the region to inform the main forum.

Who should attend the PSS Forum?
The PSS forum welcomes broad participation by partners in the region and internationally, representatives from the Regional Economic Blocs, national governments, civil society, academia, international cooperating partners, media, local leaders, community caregivers, children and youth, all sharing their practical and scientific experiences.

How to register
Registration will be open from 3 April 2023 closing on 30 September 2023
- Registration fee for virtual participants: US$30.00 with access to conference material.
- Registration fee to attend the forum in Johannesburg, South Africa is US$250 for individuals, US$200 per person for a group of 3 or more and US$100 for students (meals, refreshments and conference material packs).

How to submit an abstract
Abstracts will be submitted through an online system. A technical review panel consisting of members from co-hosts and other leading subject matter experts will be established to review all abstracts. Abstract submission will open on 10 April 2023 and close on 30 July 2023.

Co-hosting opportunities
REPSSI is inviting partners to co-host/support the PSS forum. Co-hosting can take the form of supporting specific tracks, as well as delegates and presenters, and may include strategic and technical support or direct conference funding. Your organization's logo will be placed on materials to promote the event. A full co-host package will be shared with interested institutions/organisations. Interested parties should email nokuthula.mtshali@repssi.org
## Important Dates

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